k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

FOREWORD

114 608 A brief autobiographical note will explain how I came to write this book. I was born in Beyrout, Syria, in 1881, and as a small child was taken to Damascus, where my mother's milk failed early. It so happened that Shaikh Mijwal of the Mazrab section of the Sba'a, the well-known sub-tribe of the great 'Anizah group, was in Damascus at the time, and gallantly stepping into the breach, he volunteered to secure for me a wet nurse or foster mother from among his tribeswomen. A Badawiyah girl was duly produced and according to my mother's testimony I drank her milk for several weeks. This in the eyes of the Badawin entitles me to a certain "blood affinity" with the 'Anizah; for to drink a woman's milk in the desert is to become a child of the foster mother. This fact has been of assistance to me in my dealings with the Badawin of the high desert and around Kuwait.

114 Shaikh Mijwal al Mazrab, as my readers will doubtless remember, was the desert Chieftain who married Lady Digby (at one time also Lady Ellenborough) in the late sixties, and provided her with a suitable residence in Damascus where she always spent the summer months. After the death of Lady Digby in 1881, this house was rented by my father, and I spent my childhood days rambling about the lovely garden that had once been the pride and happiness of Lady Digby. At an early age I was given my first camel ride, by Shaikh Mijwal's grown-up son Shaikh Ja'afat, or Ya'afat as he was called, who still clearly remembers the incident.

My father was at this time H.B.M.'s Consul at Damascus.

KUWAIT
September 26, 1936

page 7
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1: Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

purposes, as can be seen from the large number of men of eighty years 833
and over who still continue to marry and produce children. Haji Hillal bin Faja'an al Mutairi, the famous Kuwait pearl merchant, married the last of his thirty-two wives at eighty-five, and got two boys and three girls by her. His Majesty King 'Abdul 'Aziz al Sa'ud told Shaikh 'Abdullah al Salim al Subah (according to the latter's statement to me), that the most wonderful experience of his life and that above all things worth living for had always been "To put his lips to the woman's lips, his body on her body and his feet on her feet".

A Badawin bride will show great modesty on "the first night", 834
and will make no effort to uncover her face, head or body. The husband must not ask her to do this, for such an act would be most immodest, and might lay her open to the suspicion in her husband's eyes of previous immoral leanings.

The man's role is to plead with her first, and when she refuses, gives a negative shake of her head, or hangs her head in silence, he is entitled to use force, and himself to remove her *burqa* and various parts of her clothes. She does not resent her husband's doing this but she must show proper modesty by pretending to resist with all her might.

A woman who suckles two children of opposite sexes, one her 608 ●
own and the other the child of another, makes those children blood 853
brother and sister. They can never marry each other, and the boy throughout his life can look upon the face of the girl so nursed with him. They have become foster brother and sister. For example, 'Abdullah al Mubarak al Subah is foster brother of the daughter of a Rashaida woman, the wife of one of the shaikh's *fiddwis*, by name Abu Hadida. I know both personally, and though 'Abdullah is the son of the late Ruler of Kuwait, he treats the Rashaida girl in true foster-brother fashion, quite charming to see, and often goes in spring to camp with her father and mother, and is on the friendliest of terms with his foster sister.

A woman's breast is known as *daid* (plu. *diid*, dual *daidain*).

A maiden's breast is *nuhaid* (two breasts are *nuhaidain*).